Amendments to the Claims

Claims 1-69 (Canceled).

70. (Currently Amended) A dunnage conversion machine for converting a sheet stock material into a relatively lower density dunnage product, comprising a feeding assembly having a pair of opposed members cooperative to engage stock material therebetween and advance the stock material along a path through a transfer region, wherein the opposed members each include at least one gripper movable through the transfer region, each gripper includes a central portion and laterally spaced end portions bounding the central portion, and when viewed along a longitudinal axis through the transfer region, the laterally-spaced portions of at least one gripper from each opposed member transversely overlap to bound opposing ~~transverse~~ lateral sides of the path through the transfer region, while the transversely-spaced central portions are transversely spaced apart so as not to overlap each other, wherein the grippers of the opposed grippers are rotatable through partially overlapping volumes, leaving a longitudinally-extending gap therebetween that defines the path of the stock material through the transfer region.

71. (Previously Presented) A dunnage conversion machine as set forth in claim 70, wherein the grippers are arranged in transversely opposed sets of grippers disposed on opposite transverse sides of the transfer region.

72. (Previously Presented) A dunnage conversion machine as set forth in claim 71, wherein the grippers of each set are circumferentially spaced around a common axis and are joined together for rotation about the common axis.

73. (Previously Presented) A dunnage conversion machine as set forth in claim 71, wherein the grippers of each set extend perpendicularly from the respective common axis.

74. (Previously Presented) A dunnage conversion machine as set forth in claim 71, wherein the feeding assembly further includes a set of transfer assemblies having connected thereto the respective sets of grippers, the transfer assemblies being operative to move the grippers of the respective set toward each other at the upstream end of the transfer region to transversely engage the strip of dunnage and away from each other at the downstream end of the transfer region to release the strip of dunnage.

75. (Previously Presented) A dunnage conversion machine as set forth in claim 74, wherein the grippers of each set are movable along a non-circular path in opposite relation to one another and are operative sequentially, as the grippers move along the non-circular path in opposite relation, to transversely engage the strip of dunnage therebetween on opposite sides thereof for advancing therewith the strip of dunnage.

76. (Currently Amended) A dunnage conversion machine ~~as set forth in claim 70, comprising~~ for converting a sheet stock material into a relatively lower density dunnage product, comprising a feeding assembly having a pair of opposed members cooperative to engage stock material therebetween and advance the stock material along a path through a transfer region, wherein the opposed members each include at least one gripper movable through the transfer region, each gripper includes a central portion and laterally spaced end portions bounding the central portion, and when viewed along a longitudinal axis through the transfer region, the laterally-spaced portions of at least one gripper from each opposed member transversely overlap to bound opposing transverse sides of the path through the transfer region, while the

transversely-spaced central portions are transversely spaced apart so as not to overlap each other, and a forming assembly that includes a constriction member through which the sheet material is pulled to effect crumpling thereof and forming of the strip of dunnage.

77. (Previously Presented) A dunnage conversion machine as set forth in claim 76, wherein the constriction member is a ring.

78. (Previously Presented) A dunnage conversion machine as set forth in claim 76, wherein the forming assembly includes a constriction member at an upstream end thereof which constricts and guides the strip of dunnage from a downstream end of the forming assembly to an engagement region between the opposed members.

79. (Previously Presented) A dunnage conversion machine as set forth in claim 76, in combination with a supply of sheet stock material, wherein the constriction member defines an oval aperture through which the strip of dunnage is compressed circumferentially, the width of the aperture being smaller than the width of the sheet material.

80. (Previously Presented) A method of converting a sheet stock material into a relatively less dense strip of dunnage, comprising the following steps: engaging and advancing the stock material along a path through a transfer region, including transversely bounding the path by a pair of transversely opposed members that include at least one gripper movable through the transfer region, and laterally bounding the path by a pair of laterally-spaced portions of the at least one gripper separated by a central portion, whereby when viewed along a longitudinal axis extending through the transfer region, the central portion of the at least one gripper of one opposed member is spaced from the other opposed member, wherein the engaging and advancing steps

include rotating first and second sets of transversely opposed grippers through partially overlapping volumes, leaving a longitudinally-extending gap therebetween that defines the path of the stock material through the transfer region.

81. (Previously Presented) A method as set forth in claim 80, wherein the engaging step includes deforming opposite sides of the strip of dunnage as it moves through the transfer region.

82. (New) A method as set forth in claim 80, wherein the advancing step includes moving at least one gripper from each of the opposed members through the transfer region in longitudinally offset yet paired relation for gripping and advancing the strip of dunnage.

83. (Previously Presented) A method as set forth in claim 80, wherein the engaging and advancing steps include progressively moving at least one gripper from each of the opposed members toward the opposing opposed member at an upstream end of the transfer region to narrow the gap between the opposed members and engage the sheet material between the opposed members, and progressively moving at least one gripper from each of the opposed members away from the opposing opposed member at a downstream end of the transfer region to widen the gap and release the sheet material therefrom.

84. (Previously Presented) A method as set forth in claim 80, wherein the engaging and advancing steps include moving at least one gripper in a non-circular path.

85. (Previously Presented) A method as set forth in claim 80, wherein the transversely opposed members include grippers arranged in transversely opposed first

and second sets of grippers connected to respective first and second gripper carriages disposed on opposite transverse sides of the transfer region.

Claim 86 (Canceled).